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ABSTRACT

This paper traces the concept of the "gifted disadvantaged" child and reviews the development of educational resources for this special population. The National Merit Scholarship Program is described as an example of a program which, though designed to provide opportunities for students from all social strata, until 1964, did not initiate a separate competition for black students. Learning and achievement characteristics of disadvantaged children, as identified by various educational researchers, are discussed. Examples of programs for identifying and nurturing the disadvantaged gifted are described. Observations regarding goals and strategies in providing for the gifted disadvantaged population are also offered: (1) the general goal for this group is the same as that for the advantaged gifted; (2) differing school and neighborhood milieus and value systems affect the scholastic performance of students; (3) the disadvantaged student has an excellent capacity for problem solving; (4) the communications capabilities of these students must be understood and enhanced; (5) procedures for identifying the gifted disadvantaged must be broad; (6) differentiated curriculum is essential for instruction; (7) the teacher is important in the development of the gifted student; and (8) there must be an active partnership between the home, the community, and the school. (Author/GC)

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Nuturing the Potential of the Gifted Disadvantaged

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NURTURING THE POTENTIAL OF THE GIFTED DISADVANTAGED

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Although the term "gifted disadvantaged" is a relatively recent addition to our lexicon, the population which it is intended to encompass has been of concern to educators for quite some time-- not always in a positive and healthy way. The influence of social-class, race, and ethnic origin on the development of talent potential has been at issue for decades. In the early days, children from non-Anglo-Saxon stock and of the poor were considered intellectually inferior (of "worm eaten stock" as one educator put it) and surely not a source of giftedness and talent. Selden has examined the relationships between eugenics and curriculum from 1860 on, pointing out the involvement and leadership of Leta Hollingworth, an early proponent of education for the gifted, and her contemporaries in the American Galton Society which "saw social, political, and economic problems as at root biological and it offered a solution which in turn was biological."[1] Selden observed: "While it is unwarranted to assume that current educators of the gifted are eugenists, not to confront and deal with these conservative, non-democratic, and in many ways, racist dimensions of the field's history is unwise."[2]

In his Inglis Lecture at Harvard University in 1948, black sociologist Allison Davis pointed out:

> In spite of certain universal similarities (in moral sanctions, language familial structure, dress, and technical adaptations) which appear in society, the social conditions under which persons have access to fundamental biological and social goals are differentiated by a system of privilege.[3]

Examining three types of status groups in American society-- social classes, ethnic or foreign born groups, and color castes-- Davis observed that the "three types of social stratification differ with respect to the opportunity allowed an individual living within the system to move into (or associate with) a social rank other than that into which he was born."[4] Arguing that the child was "in school primarily to learn how to think, to develop his reason, his insight, his invention, his imagination," Davis saw "the greatest need of education...to discover the best curricula for developing children's basic mental activities; such activities, that is, as the analysis and organization of observed experiences, the drawing of inferences, the development of inventiveness."[5]

In the early 1950s, America became concerned with the development of its resources of specialized talent and the Commission on Human Resources and Advanced Training warned that America was wasting much of its intellectual talent: "Society fails to secure the full benefit of a large fraction of its brightest youth, for many bright boys and girls do not get the education which would permit them to work at the levels for which they are potentially qualified."[6] A large proportion of the youth who were not getting the education which would nurture their potential to the fullest were those from the lower social classes, the ethnic or foreign born groups, and the color castes. This is, of course, one definition of disadvantaged: "A child is at a disadvantage if, because of social, or cultural characteristics (e.g., social class, race, ethnic origin, poverty, sex, geographical location, etc.) he comes into a school system with knowledge, skills and attitudes which

impede learning and contribute to a cumulative academic deficit. The disadvantage may persist throughout school life and contribute to restricting later economic and social opportunities."[7]

A 1954 report of the Conservation of Human Resources Project observed: "Superior performance in any society is limited by the number of individuals with a high order of intelligence but in our society the number of such individuals could be substantially increased through improving the opportunities for members of the lower socioeconomic classes to become interested in and to acquire a good education."[8] The Project did not detail what was meant by "a good education" in terms of curriculum and instruction but what was clear was that increasing the college-going rate (including graduate and professional education) was clearly perceived as the avenue for developing the talent potential of the disadvantaged gifted. This effort at "mainstreaming"-- developing specialized talents through academic programs, traditional and non-traditional-- has dominated our efforts at nurturing the gifted and talented from all segments of the population, including the disadvantaged.

The National Merit Scholarship Program, for example, was created in 1955 "to champion the able student-- whoever he might be, from whatever stratum of society, no matter what career or college he might aspire to, from large school or small, public or private, rich town or poor."[9] The NMSC program was aimed at identifying and recognizing the most able secondary school students (the top 2% on the ability scale) and both encouraging and enabling them to attend their college of choice. Reporting in 1965 after having appointed some 11,000 Merit Scholars in its first decade, the NMSC pointed out that there were other kinds of talent loss than that occurring through the financial inability of some

students to attend college. NMSC studies pointed to a talent loss which occurs through underdevelopment of intellectual abilities before the college years and noted that:

> Such underdevelopment is more and more pronounced going down the socio-economic ladder, and reaches almost disaster proportions in culturally deprived groups subjected to discrimination, the obvious example being the Negro American population. The student from lower socioeconomic circumstances is appreciably less likely to enlarge his native gifts during his primary and secondary school years. Accordingly, as a high school junior he is unlikely to place in the uppermost one percent at all, whatever his original potential may have been. His gifts have been dissipated, perhaps in acute measure and probably irretrievably, and both he and the nation will suffer from the consequences of the loss.[10]

The second kind of talent the NMSC studies found occurs because of tremendous differences in colleges and universities, with considerable economic stratification having taken place with an advantage in faculty, facilities, and funds of a relatively few prestigious institutions. Clearly unable to do anything about this, the NMSC approach has been to protect the scholar's freedome of choice, enabling him to attend any institution without the barrier of finances. The result, of course, is that the "rich get richer" as Merit Scholars can choose prestigious institutions and do so.

Black educator, Horace Mann Bond, focused on the first source of talent loss in his 1957 Inglis Lecture at Harvard University titled, "The Search for Talent." Bond analyzed the "production" of National Merit Scholars in 1956 by profession and noted that "An American child whose father was a librarian had... 1,120 times the chance to win a National Merit Scholarship that a child whose parent was a laborer had."[11] His analysis found that: "While 168,000 physicians produced twenty-six scholars, 972,300 carpenters produced seven; 516,360 machinists produced three; 289,140 plumbers produced two; and 1,376,910 truckers produced three."[12] Bond also compared the distribution of occupations of the fathers and paternal grandfathers of black holders of academic

doctorates with the occupations of father of National Merit Scholarship winners. What he found was that the proportion of fathers of the 266 black Ph.D. holders who came from "professional, technical and kindred workers" was not very different from that of the NMSC winners (41.36% compared with 45.17%). Bond speculated that:

> the psychometrists, to really discover "talent" through standardized tests, should devise a schedule by which the results could be weighted by the contribution to scores of social class. Using such a scheme...one could predict with confidence that the child of illiterate laborers with a percentile rank of 50 could become, with superior educational opportunities, an equal competitor in college or graduate school with children from professional homes whose scores locate them on the eightieth or even ninetieth percentile levels.[12]

Bond concluded with an observation:

> There is "gold in them thar hills"; in the rural families of the nation, in the underprivileged regions and races of the nation, in the laboring multitudes now possessed for the first time in human history of second generation literacy. This is the gold of high human capacity for sustained intellectual activity on the highest levels. At no time, nor in any culture, have the effects of an equalitarian ideal of education so prepared a population for the next possible advancement toward complete equality of opportunity.[13]

In the Fall of 1964, the National Merit Scholarship program initiated a separate competition called the National Achievement Scholarship Program (NASP) to provide scholarships for black students. The first year, all of the nation's high schools were invited to nominate outstanding black students for scholarships. A total of 1280 schools nominated 4288 students from which a committee selected 629 finalists and commended 1958 students. A second committee then selected 224 NASP Scholars who were awarded four-year scholarships plus stipends which ranged from $ 250- $1,500 per year, depending on need.[14] Two years later, in the third NASP competition, black students were identified through two methods: (1) again, all high schools were invited to nominate talented black students and (2) black students who scored high on the National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test were identified. Of 5,624 participants, about

20 percent were identified by nomination only, approximately 20 percent were identified by test only, and the remainder were both nominated and took the test. Interestingly, the group with high NMSC test scores only (had not been nominated) were more likely to come from high schools which had a lower proportion of blacks, had more books in the library, was less likely to be a public school, more often had a National Honor Society chapter, and usually had a Dean's List than did the group which had been nominated only. The investigator concluded that these students seemed to come from "superior schools where they were not as visible to the nominators as were their counterparts in relatively less competitive schools where it takes less ability to stand out academically."[15] Moreover, they could well have been overlooked had the process relied on nomination only; "the nationally administered test identified them." However, the nomination procedure provided a group which "tended to have a broader range of personal characteristics and to come from a greater variety of schools; on the whole, they seemed to be less advantaged in their socioeconomic and educational background."[16] Both procedures apparently had merit but one (nomination) provided a breadth of coverage and the other (high score on test) identified the most able students. In the search for talent among black students, a value decision has to be made.

The National Merit Scholarship Corporation studies have, over the years, provided some interesting insights concerning these able youth, both black and non-black. What is clear from at least one follow-up study in 1971 of 28,800 youth selected from among NMSQT participants is "that the test-bright achiever of either race (black or non-black) is almost certain to enter college regardless of characteristics such as sex or parental earnings."[17] The important phrase in the finding is, of course, "test-bright achiever" and experience has taught that there are fewer test-bright achievers among youth

from low socioeconomic families or those from racial or ethnic minorities. Clearly, members of a particular race, ethnic group, or lower social class are not homogeneous-- they are not all disadvantaged any more than middle-class whites are all advantaged.

The studies by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation confirm that able youth, both black and non-black, are attending college at a high rate, a threefold increase between 1955 and 1970. High quality colleges and universities have shifted some of their attention from recruiting able students to reflecting on the nature of the education being provided this influx. However, the questions raised by open admissions programs and the expansion of higher education programs are serious ones. College and universities are concerning themselves with issues of curriculum and instruction, much as secondary schools have been doing for some time.

Some Characteristics of the Disadvantaged

Long before the "Great Society" and the "War on Poverty," there was considerable evidence that "the social characteristics of the child's family affect his chances of success at school."[18] As Boocok puts it:

> Children whose parents are outside the cultural "mainstream" (although the exact "mainstream" boundaries are not clear, and may vary from one part of society to another, those who are poor and of racial religious minority groups tend to be excluded from it) are less likely to have the kind of school career that in turn enables them to succeed in the adult world.[19]

Keniston comments that "the perspective from which we traditionally define the problem of subordinate minorities logically permits only two possible explanations for this lack of success: Either there is something wrong with our schools, or there is something wrong with minority children."[20] Keniston notes that the War on Poverty in the 1960s accepted and acted on

both of these explanations: "the extraordinary deficiencies in schooling offered minorities were rediscovered" and, simultaneously, "it was widely accepted that minority children themselves arrived in school with environmentally caused 'deficits' stemming from their 'cultural deprivation,' 'lack of verbal stimulation,' and 'inadequate home environments.'"[21]

Ogbu compares the various explanatory theories as they apply to black children (estimating that 74 percent of such children would be classified as lower-class or disadvantaged):

> The cultural deprivation theory assumes that black children fail in school because they are deficient in the cognitive, linguistic, and other skills that promote a white middle-class type of school success. The reason for their lack of such skills, according to this theory, is that black parents do not raise their children the way that white middle-class parents do. The cultural conflict theory, on the other hand, asserts that black children fail to achieve white middle-class type of school success because they possess different linguistic, cognitive, and other school-related skills that are not recognized by the schools for instructional purposes. The institutional deficiency theory maintains that schools are organized to promote success among white middle-class children and failure among black children. Educational inequality theory blames black school failure on lack of sufficient remedial programs to counteract the negative educational influences of the home and community.[22]

Ogbu argues that none of these theories takes into account the nature of the American caste system with its history of exclusion of blacks from the high-quality education provided whites or the effects of job ceilings on educational aspirations of minorities. He hypothesizes that "the personal attributes transmitted to black children in the course of their socialization may be perfectly normal skills required by their position in the caste system, although they are not the types of skills that encourage the white middle-class type of school success."[23]

Boocock asserts that parents of school achievers expect more of their children, communicate this to them, and, more important, teach them the

behaviors required to fulfill those expectations. In her view, "what children who fail to "make" it in school lack is role-playing skill, not the desire to succeed, and because they do not know how to play the role of student, they are less likely to do the things that will lead to success."[24] This, coupled with the probability that the disadvantaged child will be taught by more inexperienced teachers, results in his "fulfilling teachers' and society's expectations for him--and guaranteeing that he will remain at the bottom of the social ladder."[25]

Another strand of study and hypothesis regarding differential achievement is found in Wilson's report on the consequences of residential segregation of social classes and college-going aspirations of high school boys. In predominantly middle-class high schools, achievement and aspirations were higher for both middle- and lower-class students than was true in the predominantly lower-class schools. Thus, the climate set by the majority group in the secondary school seemed to have significant affects on the achievement and aspirations of all students.[26] Wilson has studied social stratification at the sixth-grade level as well and finds the effects on achievement of socio-economic status and race as well as sex, in this study, are confirmed again. The implications of these and related studies suggest that the climate and social milieu of the school might be manipulated to raise achievement and aspirations, particularly of disadvantaged.

A somewhat different picture of disadvantaged children is presented by Riessman, one of the first to write about the poor and racial minorities. Riessman titles a chapter in The Culturally Deprived Child (a book title which seems to have been foisted on Riessman and which troubled him), "The Slow Gifted Child." Riessman argues that there is a big difference between the poor learner and the slow learner:

> While our culture emphasizes speed, there is really no reason to assume that gifted, creative people have to learn rapidly or perform rapidly. Some people take a long time to learn basic concepts, but when they finally do so, they may use these ideas in thoughtful, penetrating fashion. Others may learn a concept rapidly and then switch to some other area without ever pursuing the concept in depth.[27]

The characteristics which are typical of the disadvantaged child's style, Riessman asserts, include: physical and visual rather than aural; content-centered instead of form-centered; oriented externally rather than introspective; problem-centered instead of abstract-centered; inductive rather than deductive; spatial rather temporal; and slow, careful, patient, persevering where he feels it important, rather than quick, clever, facile, and flexible as is the rapid learner. Moreover, Riessman argues that the pattern of these characteristics is, according to Irving Taylor, very much like that found among one type of highly creative person.[28]

Similarly, Torrance has identified a number of "creative positives of disadvantaged groups" which his experience and related research suggest occur frequently and to a high degree. These include such characteristics as ability to express feelings and emotions; ability to improvise with commonplace materials; enjoyment of and ability in art related activities; enjoyment of and ability in creative movement activities; fluency and flexibility in non-verbal media; responsiveness to the concrete and to the kinesthetic; rich sense of humor; problem-centeredness; emotional responsiveness; etc.. Torrance reports that there are no statistically significant differences due to either race or socioeconomic status on the Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking.[29] Torrance's model downplays "measurement in the traditional sense whether by creativity, intelligence, or achievement tests... and requires careful and sensitive observation and evaluation in settings that

provide built-in motivation and opportunities for creative thinking and expression." [30]

According to Riessman, Taylor has found that on word association tests, disadvantaged children's responses are often more unusual, more original and independent, and less conventional. The disadvantaged, Taylor believes, are less restricted by verbal forms of communication but permit language to interact with non-verbal communication forms such as body language, gestures and pictures. This interaction with other kinds of communication results in their being less word-bound, less restricted to thinking in terms of the structure of language, and more able to break through the language barrier.[31] It is the formal language deficiencies, in Riessman's view, which constitutes the disadvantaged child's Achilles heel in the school setting.

We have a good deal of research about the nature and characteristics of the disadvantaged populations and some theories about why they behave and perform as they do, just as we have a long history of research about the nature of the gifted and talented. In our concern for the identification and nurturing of the gifted disadvantaged and talented, the two strands must be related. There are, of course, gifted and talented youngsters who are poor and from racial and/or ethnic minorities who are nurtured in culturally and intellectually rich environments. And, there are middle-class and even upper class children who are actually culturally deprived since they are in home environments where no one mediates their cultural experiences.

Examples of Programs for Identifying and Nurturing Disadvantaged Gifted

There have been a number of programs aimed at identifying and nurturing gifted and talented among disadvantaged populations.

The serious, sustained efforts began in the 1950s with the recognition that the disadvantaged populations represented America's largest undeveloped talent reservoir. The motivation was to increase America's resources of specialized talent by identifying able and talented youth, improving their success in academic endeavors, increasing their college going and graduate or professional school attendance rates, and, ultimately, creating opportunities for the utilization of developed talent. Equal opportunities for using one's developed gifts and talents is the crucial element in the process which has not always been attended to.

Some examples of programs for disadvantaged gifted are described briefly below to illustrate large- and small-scale efforts, some of which functioned for a period of time and then were phased out and others of which are still in operation.

Demonstration Guidance Project. The National Scholarship Service and Fund for Negro Students (NSSFNS) joined with the New York City Board of Education in a Demonstration Guidance Project aimed at identifying, stimulating, and guiding able students from low socioeconomic backgrounds toward college education.[32] Begun in 1956, the project was designed as a six-year effort, three years at Junior High School 43-Manhattan and three at George Washington High School. The junior high school level was chosen because "of the firm conviction that a program to overcome the stifling of educational motivation in disadvantaged children should be developed several years before the legal age of school leaving."[33]

Manhattanville Junior High School (JHS 43-M) served a pupil population of 1,400 in a low socioeconomic area (West Harlem). The pupil population was approximately 50 percent black, 40 percent Puerto Rican, and

10 percent white and others. In June 1956, available test scores, grades, and teachers' comments were augmented by administration of a non-verbal test of intelligence, reading and arithmetic achievement tests, a personality test, and teacher ratings. Each student was evaluated on a 10-point scale with points given for above-average I.Q., for academic achievement no lower than one year below grade level, and for a positive teacher assessment of academic potential. By the usual criteria for identifying gifted students, the DGP standards were low and liberal-- 717 pupils (334 boys and 383 girls) or more than half the student body were identified as having academic potential and included in the project.

The program consisted of remedial services in reading, mathematics, and speech both in regular and special classes; of group guidance aimed at raising educational aspirations realistically and meaningfully; of clinical services by a psychologist and a social worker; of cultural enrichment which used the cultural resources of the city (theater, museums, concerts, operas) and visits to college campuses; and of parental education and involvement in the program.

At George Washington High School, class size was reduced for all DGP students and a double period provided for English. After school tutoring was provided for students who needed extra help. An intensive group and individual guidance program was provided and the clinical services of a psychologist and social worker continued. The cultural program was continued and extended.

The scholastic achievement of the Demonstration Guidance Project students at George Washington High School improved dramatically, the dropout rate dropped significantly, college admissions and attendance increased with

NSSFNS assisting with scholarship and financial aid. The Demonstration Guidance Project demonstrated that the procedures for identification were useful with disadvantaged pupils, that remedial services coupled with cultural enrichment, more intense guidance and parental involvement could reverse the spiral of poor academic achievement and low educational aspirations. The Demonstration Guidance Project provided the basis for the "Higher Horizons Program" which expanded the concept to some 52 elementary schools, 13 junior high schools, and 11 high schools with 64,075 pupils in grades 3 through 10. However, the Higher Horizons Program was not funded at the same level as the Demonstration Guidance Project, was unable to provide the same kind of program and services, and did not attain the success of the DGP.[34]

The College Discovery and Development Program. The College Discovery and Development Program (CDDP) is a partnership between the New York City Board of Education and the City University of New York (CUNY) whose aims are "to prepare educationally and economically disadvantaged and underachieving students to meet the standards associated with college admission, to provide an enriched and intensified high school experience, change attitudes concerning success, motivate students toward self growth and development, raise the aspiration level, and stimulate the students toward individual achievement."[35] Begun in 1965, the program operates in five high schools (one in each of the five boroughs). Close to 1500 students are involved in the program which functions as a school-within-a-school and with slightly reduced class size (20 to 30).

The selection procedures stress economic and social disadvantage, evidence of potential which is higher than past academic achievement, and previous achievement at a level below that required for transfer to an

academic high school. Students are referred through ninth year junior and senior high schools, guidance counselors and community action agencies. The applications are then screened by City University personnel and a roster of eligible applicants is established. A panel of counselors from the CDDP high schools then reviews each application and makes the final selection.

CDDP operates as a school-within-a-school, with the core of the program individualized and small group instruction following the standard New York City high school curriculum as the basic program. In addition to regular CDDP English classes, students receive 200 minutes per week supplementary reading instruction. Remedial instruction is provided in mathematics and other basic subjects. The ratio of guidance counselors to students is 1:100 enabling more intense individual and group guidance. Individual tutoring is provided as needed.

A special tutoring program involves college students who are themselves from low-income families working with CDDP students. The project was designed to help students "use their personal potential more productively by developing better study skills; improve their ability to understand and to meet school requirements; identify with their tutor-mentors who, although themselves from economically needy backgrounds, were college students in good standing; and to engage the talents of these youth who otherwise would join the ranks of the school dropouts."[36] The program is aimed at improving aptitude and achievement but raising self-esteem and education-vocational aspirations as well.

The CDDP teachers and City University personnel were involved in curriculum development in order to use the basic academic curriculum

as the springboard for enrichment and individualization. Learning-how-to-learn skills instruction was provided.

CDDP students are guaranteed admission to CUNY colleges. However, more than a quarter of the CDDP students apply to and are accepted by various private and state colleges. More than two-thirds of the CDDP students end up in college when a 90 percent dropout rate from high school was predicted for this population at the point of selection. Follow-ups indicate success of CDDP students in higher education, as judged by grade point averages and degrees earned.[37]

Upward Bound Program. Upward Bound Program (UBP) is a federally funded program "designed to reach low-income high school students who have pontential for successfully completing a postsecondary program but who, due to inadequate preparation or lack of motivation, are prevented from seeking higher education or from meeting conventional criteria for admission to college, university, or technical institute."[38] The UB program has three major objectives: (1) to increase the high school retention rates of its participants; (2) to increase the rate of entry of participants into post-secondary institutions; and (3) to generate the skills and motivation required for success in education beyond high school.

Typically, UB students reside on a college, university or secondary school campus for an intensive six- to eight-week session during which they attend classes, participate in various cultural and social events, and receive counseling. During the academic year, they may attend Saturday classes, may participate in periodic tutorial/counseling sessions, and participate in occasional cultural enrichment and social activities. Students are provided with a stipend of no more than $ 30.00 per month. For the FY 1973, 27,900

students were served by 416 UP projects. An evaluation of 333 regular UB projects during 1973-74 provided somewhat mixed findings: "for student outcomes relating to postsecondary school school entry, there are strong positive relationships with UB participation; but for outcomes related to high school academic success or continuation no consistent relationships to UB participation exist."[39]

A Better Chance, Inc.. Since its founding in the mid-1960s, A Better Chance, Inc. (ABC) has made it possible for more than 6,000 minority youngsters of outstanding ability and motivation to complete their secondary school education at one of the "better" independent or public schools. The premise is that these schools provide the kinds of programs and resources which enable them to meet the needs of gifted and talented individuals and that minority youngsters can profit from exposure to those experiences and environments. ABC coordinates the network for identifying gifted disadvantaged (minority) youth, placing and supporting them.

The independent schools participating in the program are all highly selective ones, most are residential as well. Placed in a challenging environment and provided with considerable special help through individual tutoring and counseling, these minority group students (primarily black and Spanish-speaking) were able to achieve at a level where they were accepted at many selective colleges and universities from which 70 percent have graduated.[40]

Independent Study Program for Gifted and Potentially Gifted High School Students. The Independent Study Program (ISP) "seeks to identify and foster gifted young people in three urban high schools and one suburban high school."[41] Five staff members, teachers in academic

subjects, coordinate the ISP in the high schools and counsel students in independent study activities. In subjects other than those of the coordinators, other classroom teachers provide advisement. The ISP staff members consult with students on a one-to-one basis and in small groups in the schools in which they serve as coordinators and, on request, in the other high schools.

The philosophy underlying the program is expressed by Blanning as follows:

> Education for gifted adoelscents needs to rest on the belief that adolescents respond to learning environments in which adults set limits and make requirements that enable students to win their struggle for freedom. Within the context of guidance, students want to stand on their own feet, make their own decisions and choices, assume responsibility for themselves, find their own talents and potential, their limits, their possibilities, and their hopes based on new ways of looking at the world. [42]

Students are selected on the basis of information which includes Differential Aptitude Test scores (verbal, math and abstract reasoning test); scores from the figural Torrance Creativity Test (fluency, flexibility, originality and elaboration in thinking sections); standardized test scores; and school grades. Students scoring 90 or above on any section of the Differential Aptitude Test are considered academically gifted whether or not they score high on the creativity tests. Students who score high on the creativity tests but lower on the DAT are also considered. Grades are used in conjunction with the other data. A student may also submit "concrete evidence of superior work, along with strong recommendations from his counselor and two or more teachers" even if his test scores and grades are weak. These data are all used to rate the youngster on a scale which ranks the individuals intellectual and creative thinking abilities together with his attitude and style in academic work.

The components of the program include independent study projects

in a variety of areas. In order to prepare the ISP youngsters for college work, weekly conferences, term papers, and seminar reports are required. The student may meet program requirements "through the selection of a research independent study course, an apprenticeship arrangement in conjunction with study, a course survey with weekly or biweekly seminar discussions, or through the Independent Learning Experience, a structure of the Program for seniors with highly specialized interests."

Another aspect of ISP involves the Research Assistant Program which has three purposes: (1) To provide the student an opportunity to contribute their talents to the ongoing life of the school while engaged in experiential education, (2) To provide the classroom teacher with needed assistance, enabling one-to-one instruction or enriched lessons based on resource work of the ISP assistant, and (3) To provide academic models for other students by demonstrating through their own behavior that academic activities are acceptable and desirable.[43]

"Unique Strengths" vis-a-vis College Preparatory Focus. At the Third National Conference on Disadvantaged Gifted, Smilansky and Nevo described "A Longitudinal Study of the Gifted Disadvantaged" which gave details of a boarding home fostering program for culturally and socioeconomically disadvantaged adolescents in Israel.[44] In his foreword, Torrance observed that some might object to the program "and consider it inconsistent with the values of gifted education in the United States." The issue which Torrance raised is that of "the development of programs to capitalize upon the unique strengths of disadvantaged and culturally different children" which he advocates "rather than educating them to 'fit the mold' of dominant mainstream society."[45] Torrance points out that there are still very few

disadvantaged students in programs for the gifted and talented although the numbers have surely increased since the 1960s. In fact, he writes, some of the newer programs such as the centers for students gifted in the visual and creative arts in New Orleans and New Haven include high percentages of disadvantaged and culturally different young people.[46] It might be argued that those two school systems have a high proportion of their student populations who could be categorized as disadvantaged and culturally different so that the high percentages in these arts centers represents the distribution one would expect.

Torrance and others have argued for quite some time for the need for major revisions in curriculum and instruction to incorporate more of the divergent, productive and innovative thinking into the experiences of all students and especially the gifted and talented. These efforts can be supported with enthusiasm without compromising the notion that fitting the mold of some aspects of the mainstream society is necessary if the disadvantaged are to be advantaged. High percentages of disadvantaged in the visual and creative arts are only warranted when the unique gifts and talents of a particular population are found in these areas. Higher percentages of disadvantaged students must be identified and nurtured in all areas of talent and giftedness. The New Orleans Arts Center, for example, aims at helping the students go on to postsecondary programs where their performing talents will be further nurtured. It is possible to nurture unique talents and prepare youngsters for postsecondary programs simultaneously. In fact, both must occur if talent potential is to be realized.

McClelland once observed that "talent potential may be fairly

widespread, a characteristic which can be transformed into actually talented performance by various sorts of the right kinds of education."[47] The examples of programs described above have, to some extent, demonstrated support for McClelland's hypothesis.

Goals and Strategies for the Disadvantaged Gifted

In an article on "The Gifted and the Disadvantaged" published in 1972, it was argued that the gifted and the talented among disadvantaged and minority group populations pose a special challenge and a unique opportunity for educational planners who needed to attend to such dimensions of the problem as identification, program development, staff development, enrichment of the learning environment, development of strategies for bilingual and multicultural education, development of appropriate guidance and other ancillary services, and increase in financial resources available to the disadvantaged gifted.[48] It was noted that what was needed was a real commitment on the part of educators and society at large to the concept that "talent is not the prerogative of any racial or ethnic group, any social class, or any residential area. It may lie untapped in some situations under some conditions, but no population has either a monopoly on or an sebsence of talents."[49]

In a report on a conference on "the culturally different gifted child," Gallagher and Kinney identified a number of barriers and problems which prevented development of appropriate educational opportunities for the disadvantaged and grouped them into four categories: the school program, the educational system, the social environment, and the decision-making process.[50] The conferees suggested strategies for dealing with

these barriers. For instance, with respect to the school program, it was proposed that:

> New criteria for defining "gifted" are needed.
> Identification must depend on other measures in addition to IQ.
> Learning environments should be more open and community oriented with the use of various types of media to break down cultural and rural isolation.
> Curriculums should be more flexible and include multi-ethnic content.
> Bidialectical or bilingual approach to language should be stressed.[51]

With respect to the educational system, the conferees suggested that:

> Teacher training should be revamped to include education about cultural diversity.
> Emphasis should be placed on teaching skills that enhance creativity and expressiveness.
> School boards should insist on accountability from gifted programs regarding minority group participation.
> Special programming should be initiated.[52]

Some observations about goals, strategies, programs and provisions for the gifted and talented in disadvantaged populations follow:

1. The general goal for the disadvantaged gifted is the same as that for the advantaged gifted-- to provide the basic general education which will furnish the foundation for nurturing special talents and gifts. The broad range of individual differences and similarities must be nurtured. While this goal is the same for all gifted and talented, the strategies for attaining the goal will differ since individualization and differentiation must take into account the personal and cultural characteristics of the student. As pointed out earlier, not all low-income, racial and ethnic minority individuals are disadvantaged-- many enter school "with knowledge, skills and attitudes which impede learning" and results in their being disadvantaged while others are culturally different only. The strategies for developing individual potential must

be based on the unique strengths and weaknesses and the cultural differences the individual brings to the educational setting.

2. Differing school and neighborhood miliues and value systems affect the general scholastic performance and individual attainment of students. Talent development always has a social referent in terms of what kinds of abilities and talents are rewarded and, as a consequence, nurtured. Educational planners must be sensitive to the cultural patterns which influence the acceptance of talents, their development and exercise. They must understand the need for dealing with these cultural patterns, not in terms of particular cultural characteristics being either superior or inferior but rather in terms of their being different. Since school and neighborhood milieus affect the socializing processes, simply offering advanced courses or special opportunities may not result in their being capitalized on unless serious attention is given to the social and cultural context within which they occur.

Disadvantaged students are often in schools in which they constitute the majority and are often the victims of low expectations when such segregated or socioeconomically, racially or ethnically imbalanced schools are perceived as having only limited possibilities for outstanding performance. Neither the staff nor the community expect superior achievement. Drastic changes in attitude are essential so that expectations are a;tered and giftedness is recognized in its cultural context-- unusual potential for outstanding achievement will not always be manifested in the ghetto, the inner city, or the isolated rural area in the same ways as in the middle-class suburban school. Consequently,

Bonds notion that "There is 'gold' in them thar hills" is one which needs to be attended to by the school and the community and requires altering expectations and attitudes directly and consciously.

3. As the HEW Urban Education Task Force has pointed out, the disadvantaged student has an excellent capacity for problem solving. For instance, he must continually deal with the problems of at least two different value systems in his home or neighborhood and in the school:

> Daily, he must thread his way through the set of values which the school espouses and the set which he lives with and has learned from his family and neighborhood. He must develop and carry out strategies which permit him to survive in both worlds without being overwhelmed by the conflict diverse value systems can produce. The extent to which he survives as a whole human being with a strong and stable self-concept and a sense of worth will be dependent on the quality and reality orientation of the strategies he employs.[53]

There are several implications which can be readily drawn from this strength of the disadvantaged student. For one thing, this potential for problem-solving can be used and directed toward solving problems in academic areas for, "implied in this kind of problem-solving ...are very considerable manifestations of intelligence, information, and persistence."[54] The school must recognize and understand the strategies employed by the disadvantaged student in order to survive in his neighborhood and how this intelligence can be adapted to confronting the challenges of school tasks. In some instances, this may involve the recasting of academic problems in different terms and contexts so that they are more real and meaningful to the disadvantaged student.

Another implication is that the conflict in values which may exist between the school and the home and neighborhood is a very real one. The performance, behaviors, and achievements needed to nurture

potential for outstanding achievement are not necessarily those valued, understood and rewarded. Through direct instruction regarding values clarification and through counseling and guidance, the affect aspects of talent development must be dealt with.

Further, there are implication for instruction in cultural pluralism so that the culturally different student has opportunities for learnings with respect to his own culture and the so-called "dominant-majority" culture. Multicultural education has significance for self-esteem, for attitudes toward one's own culture, and for understanding how one's culture interacts with other cultures in a culturally pluralistic society.

4. The communications capabilities of the disadvantaged student must be understood and capitalized on as a basis for broadening and deepening. The HEW Urban Education Task Force pointed out that "the impoverished urban student does have excellent communication capability for the neighborhood in which he lives. He is insightful, sensitive, and perceptive-- and he knows that other worlds exist outside the one he lives in."[55] The disadvantaged gifted student's communications skills need to be valued, accepted, and encouraged-- but not as an end unto itself. In our society, there are many levels of communication and the disadvantaged student needs to be exposed to these different levels. In order to use one's potential fully, one has to be able to communicate in the form that is broadly acceptable and not restricted to one's own circles. Claude Brown, for example, did not write Manchild in the Promised Land in the language of the Harlem neighborhood he described. James Baldwin's writings are richer because he draws on language and experiences of his past, but his writings are not in black English. One cannot study

any discipline whether it be science or mathematics, music or fine arts, theater or the humanities, without having mastered the standard language as well as one's own language, dialect or vernacular.

The HEW Urban Education Task Force observed that the disadvantaged student is not verbally deficient but is often responsive and creative when permitted to learn in ways valid for him/her:

> Further evidence of his communication capabilities and creativity is afforded by the outpouring of graphic art, music, poetry, and skill in the performing arts which the impoverished students in Upward Bound produced when worked with in an effective program. What is equally apparent....is that this student's communication capabilities, sensitivity, insight, and creativity are simply not being released and nurtured in schools. And, again, society is losing a vast amount of talent.[56]

5. Identification procedures for identifying the gifted among the disadvantaged populations must be broader and more varied than those traditionally used to identify gifted and talented. Of course the same generalization could well be made for identifying the gifted and talented among the advantaged as well-- limited procedures are inappropriate for any identification program but are probably less critical with respect to the advantaged students. Mercer's System of Multicultural Pluralistic Assessment (SOMPA), Renzulli and Hartman's Scale for Rating Behavioral Characteristics of Superior Students, and similar approaches using multiple assessment and broad-based screening techniques have considerable promisee.

Disadvantaged and minority group students are often handicapped in the test-taking situations by lack of experience with tests and low motivation to succeed on such tests, by lack of competitiveness in the realms being tested, and by general test anxiety. The validity and reliability of many standardized tests are affected by sociocultural factors.

A committe of the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues (SPSSI) examined a number of issues involved in testing minority group children and concluded that "tests are among the most important evaluative and prognostic tools that educators have at their disposal" but, unfortunately, are misinterpreted and misused as indicators of "fixed levels of either performance or potential" rather than as diagnostic tools.[57] Further, many disadvantaged students encounter language barriers and cultural impediments in test taking.

When identifying the gifted and talented among the disadvantaged, self-identification takes on considerable more meaning. By their performance and products when provided with opportunities to demonstrate unusual potential, disadvantaged gifted students can indicate that potential. Qualities of leadership, evidence of creativity and unusual solutions to problems, sensitivity and insight to environmental and community interactions are manifested by the disadvantaged gifted involves staff development to enhance the insights and understandings of how giftedness and talents are manifested in different cultures and different settings.

6. As with all programs for the gifted and talented , differentiated curriculum is at the heart of instruction. What is required for curriculum development with the disadvantaged gifted, as with all gifted, is an understanding of the particular patterning of their intellectual, cognitive, and affective characteristics; their cultural and socializing experiences; their attitudes and aspirations in order to provide for the selection of content and teaching strategies aimed at what J. McVicker Hunt calls the "proper match" between the individual's development level and the materials and activities provided. In his Inglis lecture, Davis

observed that:

> The present curricula are stereotyped and arbitrary selections from a narrow area of middle-class culture. Academic culture is one of the most conservative and ritualized aspects of human culture. Its formalization, its lack of functional connection with the daily problems of life, has given a bloodless, fossilized character to the classroom which all of us recognize.[58]

"Successful" programs for disadvantaged gifted seem to have a number of elements. They provide instruction and experience in learning-how-to-learn and in learning how "to play the role of the student." They provide instruction and experience in the basic skills on which all advanced learnings are based, including remediation where needed. To nurture outstanding potential in any socially valuable area, one needs to be able to read and to communicate. Black English, for example, has been accepted as a legitimate language with integrity and value but if it is the only language of the black youngster, the opportunities for developing talent potential are severely restricted. In an English-dominant society, where technical, recreational, and cultural matters are communicated in English, bilingualism has considerable currency only if English is one of the languages.

Successful programs are ones in which the traditional disciplines are taught and learned in divergent rather than convergent ways. Models for curricular differentiation have been proposed which organize content differently, emphasize different skills and understandings, and reorganize problem focus. For instance, rather than studying biology in the traditiona- taxonomic fashion, the focus of study might be the ecology of a particular neighborhood. Instead of studying civic government from the textbook, governmental functioning as an exercise in power might be

studied in the local setting in vivo. Scope and sequence, focus and emphasis can be reality-based while concurrently encouraging divergent and innovative approaches to curriculum and instruction.

Successful programs employ one-to-one and small group instructional strategies wherever possible. If the experiences of the past decade with respect to programs for the disadvantaged have underscored any one point, it is that disadvantaged students profit from instructional situations of a tutorial or small group situation. Individualized attention of the kind they seem unable to have under other conditions contributes to both the affective and cognitive development of the disadvantaged learner.

Successful programs are multicultural in focus. All aspects of a racial or ethnic minority group's experience, for example, can be studied in an intellectually honest, scholarly manner which enhances the individual's valuing of his/her culture and teaches the processes of inquiry at the same time. It is only when aspects of one's culture or of any culture are studied in a superficial, shallow manner that it is readily perceived as demeaning that cultural experience.

Successful programs encourage creative, divergent approaches to study. There are essentially two approaches to introducing creativity into the curriculum-- teach "creativity" as a new subject or skill or modify the curriculum to draw on the creative possibilities in all subject areas. As DeMille explains:

> Creativity can be thought of as a new sort of subject matter or skill that is imparted by means of language, numbers, graphic and musical activities, dramatics, etc. Or, the existing curriculum can be thought of as essential core, and an effort can be made to teach it in a better way by bringing out the creativity implicit in it. The curriculum can be a vehicle for creativity or creativity can enhance the curriculum.[59]

Successful programs provide for ample opportunity for the pursuit of independent learning activities. Their are a number of dimensions which make for successful independent learning, with working by one's self or with a few peers only one of these. Students need to learn how to identify and define a problem or focus for independent study, how to locate the resources needed to pursue such study, how to organize one's time and efforts, how to share and communicate one's findings, and how to mediate the learning experience.

And, successful programs for the disadvantaged gifted have an experienced base component-- that is, they include instruction and learning which extend beyond the confines of the classroom and the school building, using the cultural, technical, and social resources of the community. Experience-based learning may be especially important to the disadvantaged gifted student both in terms of enabling him/her to study the neighboring community and to use the resources beyond one's own community. Cities, for instance, constitute rich resources for learning and development and yet there is evidence that there is differential accesibility and use of such resources by various populations of cities. Cities build and maintain museums, zoos, parks, recreation centers, cultural centers, etc. but it is the middle-class child who is more likely to use these resources than is the child of poverty. On the other hand, studies indicate that low-income ghetto homes have equal access to television and radio and use these mass media more intensively than their middle-class counterparts. Experience-based community education can make various environmental resources more accessible to the disadvantaged child.

7. Studies such as Roe's The Making of a Scientist[60] have pointed

up the importance of a "teacher" in the development of gifted individuals. This "teacher" is not necessarily a professional teacher although he/she may certainly be. Rather, this teacher becomes the role model on whom the gifted individual may pattern him/herself for certain kinds of behaviors. Apparently, this relationship between the gifted student and a mentor or role model is not necessarily one which comes about by a formal assignment but rather tends to develop more naturally from interactive experience.

Staff development is a basic aspect of developing programs for the disadvantaged gifted, necessitating examination of attitudes and expectations about identifying and nurturing talent among the disadvantaged, acquisition of appropriate teaching strategies, learning to use resources in the school and community, and acquiring insights into the nature and significance of cultural pluralism. Perhaps more than other gifted and talented students, the disadvantaged gifted are in need of mentors and counselors, role models on whom they can pattern themselves as they resolve thd personal problems which are encountered in moving between different cultures found in school, family and neighborhood-- the chief socializing and educating forces in the individual's life.

8. Education of the gifted disadvantaged must be an active partnership between the home, the community and the school. The Demonstration Guidance Project described briefly above found that involvement of the parents in the program of their children was one of the most important elements. Parents of disadvantaged children often see the school as an isolated impregnable fortress to which they have no access. They have many of the same aspirations for their children but do not share the same expecta-

tions of the educational system. They often have no basis for recognizing the unusual potential of their children. A true partnership is essential if the gifted disadvantaged are to be identified and nurtured.

In Conclusion

Just recently, the Federal program has made the identification and development of disadvantaged gifted a high priority item in its efforts for the gifted and talented. Such a thrust will certainly help focus attention on this large pool of undeveloped talent. However, it will be primarily due to local commitment and local efforts which link what we know about the disadvantaged populations and about giftedness and talent development which will result in any real progress in locating the "gold in them thar hills."

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